for Fine and Superfine varieties of Rice, which have now been categorised together.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

The Essential Commodities (Special Provision) Act, 1981

506. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 which regulates the availability of foodgrains and prevents hoarding and black-marketing has lapsed;

(b) if so, the steps taken to revive it;

(c) whether any changes are contemplated in the said Act; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981 has lapsed on 31.8.1997.

(b) to (d) The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 1997 has been promulgated by the President on 3.10.1997 containing many of the provisions of the erstwhile E.C. (SP) Act, 1981 alongwith some amendments which include inter-alia, (i) restoration of right of appeal against confiscation order by the District Collector to the judiciary; (ii) making some offences bailable; and (iii) making the bail procedure simpler to conform to the normal CrPc Procedure.

Sugar Imported by Private Traders

507. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether sugar is being imported by private traders;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) how the foreign exchange in this is to be replaced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Under the current EXIM Policy sugar is allowed to be imported under open general licence (OGL). The importers decide on the transactions based on commercial considerations. Outgo in foreign exchange on all imports is made up through accelerated exports for which measures are being continuously taken through appropriate changes in policies & programmes in consultation with trade & industry.

White Paper on Sugar Sector

508. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA': Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government was planning to prepare any White-Paper regarding the sugar sector; and

(b) if so, the reasons and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Decontrol of Sugar Approved by Committee of Secretaries

509. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Committee of Secretaries had approved a proposal to decontrol sugar;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor

(c) the steps being taken in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?